

With respect to the first paragraph on page 2 of the office action, applicant respectfully points out that since this application is the national phase of a PCT application, PCT Rule 17.2(a) provides that a priority document is being sent by the International Bureau.

As a result of the foregoing amendment, the claims have been rewritten to avoid the indefiniteness pointed out by the Examiner. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 112, are respectfully requested.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by the European reference to Basington et al., are also respectfully requested.

Applicant respectfully submits that the present invention as claimed is not anticipated by the reference relied on by the Examiner.

The reference is directed to a vending machine for printing postage stamps which includes

- a housing having a front panel with an aperture

therein,

- a camera mounted in the housing for receiving through the aperture an image of at least one person and for creating an electronic image of the at least one person,
- a printer,
- a payment receiving means for acknowledging payment and for producing a signal when payment is made,
- a computer with a memory, wherein the computer
 - 1) causes the camera to create an electronic image of the person upon receipt of the payment signal.
 - 2) saves the electronic image in the memory, and
 - 3) utilizes the electronic image of the person for controlling the printer to print a personalized postage stamp on a recording medium, and wherein
 - the personalized stamp contains specified data of a postal authority, and
 - a picture of the person based on the stored electronic image.

Consequently, the reference exclusively utilizes pictures taken by the camera of the vending machine for producing stamps. This is essentially the same procedure as it is known from automatic vending machines for passport photographs.

In accordance with the present invention as claimed, on the other hand, a stamp can be manufactured from an image taken from alternative and unlimited proposals. This method makes possible a much larger variety of possibilities of using a vending machine in which the user can design and create a stamp in accordance with his or her own ideas or samples.

The specification of the present application describes in detail in paragraphs a-g on pages 3 and 4 the possibilities available according to the present invention which are not available in accordance with the reference.

Concerning claim 20, even though this claim provides for the use of a camera, the claim does not refer to taking pictures of persons, but rather the claim deals with reading an image or text by a camera.

Therefore, it is submitted that the claims of the application are not disclosed or suggested by the reference.

Therefore, in view of the foregoing, it is submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance and such allowance is respectfully solicited.

Any additional fees or charges required at this time in connection with the application may be charged to Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 11-1835.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231, on February 25, 2003.

By:

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Friedrich Kueffner

Date: February 25, 2003